

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8336

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O.11652: NA

TAGS: PINS SOCI ET

SUBJ: SCHOOL SCENE

REFS: (A) ADDIS 3532 AND 3467; (B) ADDIS 3313; (C) ADDIS 13958
AND 2677 OF 1973

1. SCHOOL SCENE REMAINS UNSETTLED, AS DOES SITUATION IN MILITARY, LABOR, CIVIL SERVICE AND PROVINCIAL CENTERS. WHILE UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS SAID BE PREPARED TO WORK, STUDENTS IN ADDIS AND ELSEWHERE BEGAN BOYCOTTS AFTER RETURNING BRIEFLY TO CLASSES LAST WEEK (REF B).

2. ALL PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS ADDIS NOW CLOSED. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMBER DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH QUICKLY DISPERSED BY POLICE. AS FAR AS WE AWARE, NO SERIOUS INFURIES DURING PAST WEEK. MAJOR DEMANDS AND REASONS BEHIND BOYCOTT INCLUDE:

A) ELIMINATION OF ANY SCHOOL FEES - THIS DEMAND RELATED TO CELU REQUEST FOR FREE EDUCATION. LAST SCHOOL YEAR WAS DISRUPTED OVER STUDENT/PARENT OPPOSITION OT 6TH, 8TH AND 12TH GRADE EXAM FEES (SEE REF C).

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B) SYMPATHY WITH THOSE IN RURAL AREAS SEEKING EXPULSION

AND PUNISHMENT FOR CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (REF A AND SEPTTEL).

C) DEMANDS FOR STUDENT COUNCILS.

D) FEAR OF FAILING TESTS DUE LOSS OF CLASS TIME AND HOPE FOR AUTOMATIC ADVANCEMENT.

3. MANY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PROVINCIAL TOWNS ALSO BEING BOYCOTTED BY STUDENTS. THERE SEEMS BE PATTERN THAT STUDENTS SPORADICALLY ATTEND CLASS FOR FEW DAYS THEN WALK OUT. SECONDARY EDUCATION THROUGHOUT COUNTRY SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED THIS SEMESTER. STUDENT PROTESTS INCLUDE PARA 2 ISSUES, PARTICULARLY COOPERATION WITH TOWNSPEOPLE AGAINST LOCAL OFFICIALS. DESSIE SCHOOL IN EFFECT CLOSED SINCE NOVEMBER FOR REASONS RELATED "DESSIE MASSACRE" OF LAST MAY AS WELL AS CURRENT PROBLEMS. STUDENTS IN HARRAR, JIMA, DIRE DAWA, ASBE TEFARI, ERRER, HIRNA AND OTHERS ALSO OUT FOR VARIOUS RESONS. WHILE MAKALLE STUDENTS COMPLAINING ABOUT POOR DISTRIBUTION AND CORRUPTION RE RELIEF GRAIN, INCLUDING USG DONATIONS, WOLLO STUDENTS' PROTESTS NOT GENERALLY RELATED TO FAMINE PROBLEMS.

4. HSIU STUDENTS BEGAN BOYCOTT APRIL 2. UNVIERSITY STUDENTS REPORTEDLY INTIMIDATED INTO LEAVING CLASSES BY SECONDARY STUDENTS AND "RADICAL" AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, WHO HAVE DEVELOPED CLOSE TIES TO STUDENTS IN PAST TWO MONTHS (CF ADDIS 3591). MAJOR HSIU STUDENT DEMANDS INCLUDE:

A) RELEASE OF DISSIDENT ARMED FORCES MEMBERS ARRESTED LAST WEEK.

B) REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY.

C) DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY IN ETHIOPIA DUE DROUGHT.

D) PREVIOUS DEMANDS FOR RESIGNATION ENDALKACHEW AND ESTABLISHMENT POLITICAL PARTIES.

5. UNIVERSITY SCENE COMPLICATED BECAUSE RESULTS STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTION LAST WEEK DID NOT SATISFY SOME RADICAL STUDENTS WHO WANT NEW ELECTIONS. COUNCIL LEADERS HOLDING RALLIES PAST TWO DAYS TO COALESCE SUPPORT. LARGE NUMBER POLICE IN EVIDENCE. DEMONSTRATIONS WITH SECONDARY STUDENTS JOINING HAVE FOLLOWED RALLIES.

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6. LATEST STUDENT BOYCOTTS HAVE DISHEARTENED UNIVERSITY AND MINED OFFICIALS WHO WERE ALREADY CONCERNED ABOUT LOST TIME. THERE NOW GOOD POSSIBILITY SEMESTER WILL BE LOST. HSIU ADMINISTRATION EXPRESSING VIEW THAT ONLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CAN NOW RESOLVE PROBLEM EITHER BY FURTHER CONCESSIONS OR CLOSING UNIVERSITY. WYMAN

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